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THE PRICE PRIZES.

THREE PRIZES—\$50, \$30 AND \$20.

NOTHING would appear to be more appropriate at the present time than a due attention to the adoption of a national flower and the development of a national style of architecture and ornament—both to indicate the great individuality of the American people, past, present and to come.

In the selection of a floral emblem, the trailing arbutus, the golden rod, the violet, the forget-me-not and the sun flower have adherents, and it is a pleasure to note the interest manifested.

But the wider field for the development of American individuality lies in the selection of a style in architecture and ornament, as for this immortal purpose we have a plant peculiarly American and peculiarly adapted for utilization.

It is, of course, maize or Indian corn which possesses unusual variety in its stalk, leaf, plume, silk, husk and ear, every part of which in form is intrinsically and essentially beautiful and capable of adoption extensively in both art and architecture. Nor does variety end in its form, its grace of line and its light suggestive movement, but it is most richly abounding in colors that refresh and cheer, the greens of summer and the gold of autumn, each in splendid variety and of astonishing delicacy. The fruit even affords still a field for expansion, both in general form and in detail, while the shaded white of the white ear, the tinted red of the red ear, and the shaded and tinted yellow of the yellow ear, all contribute to infinite variety and immense possibility in ornament.

Col. J. A. Price, of Scranton, Pa., has authorized us to offer three prizes amounting to \$100, and divided into a first prize of \$50, a second of \$30 and a third of \$20 for the best adaptation of maize in the industrial and architectural arts.

No limitations are imposed upon the designer as to material, and workers in the metals, stone, glass, wood, paper, textiles, etc., are all invited to compete.

Suggestions in architectural design need not embrace a whole building but merely some distinctive part to characterize the whole.

All designs, which must be in black and white, should be received at this office on or before December 5th, 1889, and bear a fictitious signature, accompanied by a sealed envelope having on the outside a similar signature, and enclosing the name and address of the designer.

The following gentlemen, who are eminently representative

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

in different departments of industrial art, have consented to act as a committee of award:

HERBERT E. STREETER (J. F. & J. G. Low).
E. SPENCER HALL (Herter Bros).
ALFRED TRUMBLE (Art Critic).

THE oppressive amount of gilding in the salons of the new transatlantic steamer *Columbia* of the Hamburg line, savors of barbaric taste. The sides at given distances are adorned with paintings of scenery embedded in carving that after circling round them in bold curves and sweeps made up of stems and conventional foliage, spreads over all the remaining available surface, a continual interlacement of rounded and undulating forms. All this carving is completely swathed in gilding. Here and there it embeds lively pictures of scenery in water colors, which are completely drowned out. Even the portion of the foremast which rises in the center of the ladies' cabin has four paintings sunk in this umbrageous gilding. Music and smoking rooms show on all sides and above the same profusion of gold. As if all this display of carving were not enough, capitals and bases of pillars in the dining saloon are covered with the auriferous metal, the electric glass lobes shoot out above from a mass of stems and leaves of fire gilt brass, the garish effect being increased by mountings and rails of the same metal.

IF gilding is used sparingly in a decorative design in which the pure primaries are present, it prevents them from overwhelming secondary colors and neutral tints. Gilding, too, imparts to decorative work a more elevated character; without it many fine mural and ceiling designs look insipid. Gold ought to be employed liberally in the adornment of cornices. Rich furniture loses much of its effect if placed in rooms where there is no gilding. Gilding is most imposing in an artificial light. Some brilliant effects are obtainable by its use in balustrades in staircases, but if positive colors are employed, they do not give room for its full contrastive application.

DECORATIVE art, when it goes to nature, conventionalizes natural form—that is, selects and combines certain characteristics—adapting them to the capacity of the material. The ideal is reached when the ornament develops and beautifies the structural form. In mediæval times, color rather than relief mouldings in nature were the general rule; now relief work in embossed paper, papier mache, and other materials, has become popular, treated with polychromatic coloring. There is this in relief work that owing to the natural shadows which have a softening effect on tints it may be treated as a rule with more vivid colors than paintings on flat surfaces.

WHAT middle tints are to a landscape, the due proportion of neutral tints is to decoration, these not excluding primary hues. In nature we find leaflets varying from brown and red to deep rose color. Mark that the pale blue finds its way by a thousand small high lights more or less subdued into leaves, twigs, branches and stems. These almost insignificant lights have no small share in toning the whole and connecting part with part. Leaflets are not to be represented solely by bright, pale green, for each leaflet, bright as is its local color, is half in shade caught by the tiny fur on its surface, and many are toned down by half shadows. The general tone is therefore much subdued.

IT is worth noting that before plaster was invented ceilings were finished by trusses that supported the roof, extending down the room, and that the panels in ceilings were covered with canvas that was decorated, a style now being partially revived. What we term stiles really represent those beams or trusses. When plaster came into use the kind of work was what is called flat work, consisting of bands of color edged up with white, black or gold, the raised work being mostly figures, scrolls, monograms and coats of arms.

THERE have been in past times a development and decay of nearly every class of artistic manufacture. We do not believe, however, that this fate is reserved for either furniture or interior decoration in this country. Our confidence is that we shall advance in refinement and elegance of production, and this even with increased mechanical results. As higher excellence enlarges the sphere of production by stimulating demand, the art of design is in no danger of suffering from neglect or depreciation.

THERE is a great similarity in the process by which the fine hand-made rugs of Persia are produced and the process followed in the warp-tap-ooms of the Gobelins, the workmen first copying the outline of the design and then putting in the colors. When a pattern of a Persian rug is copied it follows that there can be no exact imitation. However readily the hand follows the eye the freedom of handiwork necessitates variation, the cooperation of the designer

ONE of the charms of low relief work, whether displayed pictorially on walls, ceilings or furniture is its suggestiveness to a degree not so fully realizable in pronounced execution, particularly when such low relief presents but partially embodied creations, which allow of the pleasurable exercise of imagination to supply what is wanting. There is about it also a pleasing lightness; and it offers in expression the last refinements of shadow.

FOR pictorial paintings on walls or ceilings the design goes through the following stages—first a sketch; next the cartoons are traced in the usual way on walls or ceiling, care being taken to form a strong outline; afterwards the forms are treated in light and shade and not till then is color applied; first come the lightest tints, then the darker tints, after which the shadows are retouched. Purity and brightness of color are secured by painting at once and without retouching.

AS knowledge of art increases past styles of cabinet work have more discriminating judgments passed upon them. What lavish, unqualified praises have been expended on Chippendale's productions. The truth is that these exhibited little merit in design and represented much that was esthetically bad, but for careful manipulation, for science of cabinet making and for sound construction they remain unexcelled.

HAND workmanship in the generality of furniture appears to be less facile than it was, partaking of that accuracy and rigidity of effect characteristic of machine work. Perhaps life is too short for it to be burdened to perfect many of the minute details which a steam driven chisel can do in a second.

ART moves in cycles of styles; at one time a separate style in blended form is resurrected; at other times we witness blended styles. New combinations of old styles may create a novelty with nothing new in principle, new only in arrangement and with no great range of variety in details. We have few decorative forms that do not retain some elements of a preceding period.

AS to the Greek honeysuckle pattern, the anthemion is to be regarded rather as the test of the beauty of radiating and upstarting masses instinct with a suggestion of vitality and growth than of any plant, a definite suggestion in the plant only being regarded and this being its accidental result.

THE primary colors in nature are peculiar to minutive or finest details, and with a singularly softened effect owing to harmony with neighboring tertiary and secondary colors, as on the feathers of birds, on insects, foliage and flowers. We find the same result when the primaries are employed by the decorator as interlacings in designs composed of small masses of color.

WELL proportioned panels or spaces, contribute largely to good effect of interior painting.

SEPTEMBER DECORATOR AND FURNISHER finishes the fourteenth volume, and there is published with it a complete index of the year's numbers. This publication has every appearance of thrift, and it certainly deserves success, for it has done excellent work in educating the public to the desirability of artistic home adornment. It is always practical, and a prime favorite with amateurs in decorative work.—*Rochester Herald*.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER contains in each issue a great amount of practical information concerning house building and house refitting, and is of value, both to the architect and the occupant of the house.—*Indianapolis Journal*.